

Adoption of an Information Integration Tool for Adults with Behavioral Health Needs

Adult Needs and Strength Assessment ANSA

The Indiana Family and Social Service Administration, Division of Mental Health and Addiction adopted an information integration tool for adults with mental health and addiction challenges. Beginning July 2009, the ANSA will be used in both the DMHA community based and state hospital services. The ANSA provides a comprehensive profile of the needs and strengths of an adult (18 and older) and their family. The basic structure of the ANSA includes multiple items under the general domains of Life Functioning, Strengths, Acculturation, Behavioral Health Needs, Risk Behaviors, and Caregiver Strengths & Needs (optional). The tool helps support development of individualized plans of care and decisions about the appropriate intensity of services. The ANSA also monitors outcomes.

The ANSA incorporates many recovery or quality of life issues including general health, employment/career, social functioning, involvement in recovery, social and community connections. The format requires core items; some core items lead to extension modules: Employment/Career, Developmental Need, Trauma, Substance Use Disorder, Dangerousness and Crime. The ANSA Manual is posted on the Indiana Behavioral Health Assessment System (IBHAS) at <http://ibhas.in.gov/Documents/ANSA%20Indiana%20Manual.pdf>

Annual training and certification is required to use the tool. A series of workshops will be held this winter and next spring to train and certify SuperUsers from service providers. SuperUsers are individuals who demonstrate a higher level of reliability than others. They are prepared to support the training of direct service staff and to help integrate the tool and resulting information into every day practice. A web based training/certification site (<http://www.communimetrics.com/CansCentralIndiana>) supports the training and certification of Indiana's providers. Although providers will be certified on line beginning January 2008, training is most effective in small groups with a SuperUser.

Completed assessments will be reported in the Indiana Behavioral Health Assessment System (IBHAS), an interactive website that collects, analyzes and reports assessment information. Information from ANSA assessments may be used in a number of ways: Decision Support, Quality Improvement, and Outcome Monitoring. This Total Clinical Outcome Management (TCOM) approach captures information about consumers that can support decisions at multiple levels: consumer, program and service system.

The ANSA evolved from the Severity of Psychiatric Illness (SPI) (Lyons, 1998) which has well established reliability and validity and has been used in behavioral healthcare research (Anderson & Lyons, 2001; Lyons, Colletta, Devens & Finkel, 1995; Lyons, Kisiel, Dulcan, Cohen & Chesler, 1997; Lyons, Stutesman et al., 1997; Mulder, Koopmans & Lyons, 2005). Strengths were added as the SPI evolved into the ANSA.

A large number of individuals have collaborated in the development of ANSA. The ANSA is an open domain tool for use in service delivery systems that address the behavioral health needs of adults and their families. The copyright is held by the Praed Foundation to ensure that it remains free to use. For specific permission to use, please contact the foundation at praedfoundation@yahoo.com. For more information on the ANSA assessment tool, contact: John S. Lyons, Ph.D., JSL329@northwestern.edu or Betty.Walton@fssa.in.gov.